

B. Claims

Please cancel claim 10 without prejudice or disclaimer, amend claims 1, 12 and 13 and add new claim 21 as follows. A complete listing of all the claims appears below; this listing replaces all earlier amendments and listings of the claims.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of adhering temperature-sensitive inclusions on edible lightweight cores comprising the steps of:

(a) coating edible lightweight cores with a binder to form binder-coated edible lightweight cores;

(b) mixing the binder-coated edible lightweight cores with temperature-sensitive inclusions to form an adhesive mass; and

(c) drying the adhesive mass to form edible lightweight cores having temperature-sensitive inclusions adhered thereto;

wherein steps (a), (b) and (c) are carried out at a temperature of less than 50°C;

wherein the process further comprises, ~~(1)~~ prior to step (a), the steps of (d1) treating the edible lightweight cores with a hydrophobic barrier composition and (d2) drying the hydrophobic barrier composition; and

wherein the process optionally comprises, (2) after step (c), the steps of (e1) applying a non-stick coating to the edible lightweight cores having temperature-sensitive inclusions adhered thereto and (e2) drying the non-stick coating; or

~~(3) both (1) and (2).~~

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the edible lightweight cores are selected from the group consisting of popcorn, crisp rice, extruded corn puffs, cereal, potato chips, granola, marshmallow and mixtures thereof.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the edible lightweight cores have a water activity of less than 0.65.

4. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein the edible lightweight cores are candy-coated.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the binder comprises water, a film former and an adhesive agent.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 5, wherein the film former is starch and wherein the adhesive agent is maltodextrin.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the binder has a water activity ranging from 0.10 to 0.60.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature-sensitive inclusions are selected from the group consisting of candy-shelled chocolate pieces, chocolate chips, nougat, caramel pieces, fondants, marshmallow and combinations thereof.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 8, wherein the temperature-sensitive inclusions are candy-shelled chocolate pieces.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) Edible lightweight cores having temperature-sensitive inclusions adhered thereto, made according to a process comprising the steps of:

(a) coating edible lightweight cores with a binder to form [[a]] binder-coated edible lightweight cores;

(b) mixing the binder-coated edible lightweight cores with temperature-sensitive inclusions to form an adhesive mass; and

(c) drying the adhesive mass to form edible lightweight cores having temperature-sensitive inclusions adhered thereto;

wherein steps (a), (b) and (c) are carried out at a temperature of less than 50°C;

wherein the process further comprises, (†) prior to step (a), the steps of (d1) treating the edible lightweight cores with a hydrophobic barrier composition and (d2) drying the hydrophobic barrier composition; and

wherein the process optionally comprises, (2) after step (c), the steps of (e1) applying a non-stick coating to the edible lightweight cores having temperature-sensitive inclusions adhered thereto and (e2) drying the non-stick coating; or

(3) both (1) and (2).

13. (Currently Amended) Edible lightweight cores having temperature-sensitive inclusions adhered thereto,

wherein the edible lightweight cores are coated with a binder comprising water, a film former and an adhesive agent, and

wherein the edible lightweight cores are coated with a hydrophobic barrier composition,

wherein the edible lightweight cores are optionally coated with a non-stick coating or both a hydrophobic barrier composition and a non-stick coating, and

wherein the binder is coated onto the edible lightweight cores at a temperature of less than 50°C.

14. (Original) The edible lightweight cores according to claim 13, wherein the edible lightweight cores are selected from the group consisting of popcorn, crisp rice, extruded corn puffs, cereal, potato chips, granola, marshmallow and mixtures thereof.

15. (Original) The edible lightweight cores according to claim 13, wherein the edible lightweight cores have a water activity of less than 0.65.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) The edible lightweight cores according to claim

13, wherein the film former is starch and wherein the adhesive agent is maltodextrin.

18. (Previously Presented) The edible lightweight cores according to claim 13, wherein the binder has a water activity ranging from 0.10 to 0.60.

19. (Original) The edible lightweight cores according to claim 13, wherein the temperature-sensitive inclusions are selected from the group consisting of candy-shelled chocolate pieces, chocolate chips, nougat, caramel pieces, fondants, marshmallow and combinations thereof.

20. (Original) The edible lightweight cores according to claim 19, wherein the temperature-sensitive inclusions are candy-shelled chocolate pieces.

21. (New) Individual edible lightweight cores of popcorn, each having one or more temperature-sensitive inclusions of candy-shelled chocolate pieces adhered thereto,

wherein the edible lightweight cores are coated with a binder comprising water, a film former and an adhesive agent,

wherein the edible lightweight cores are coated with a hydrophobic barrier composition,

wherein the edible lightweight cores are optionally coated with a non-stick coating, and

wherein the binder is coated onto the edible lightweight cores at a temperature of less than 50°C.